

Minutes of School Committee Meeting 04/03/14

A regular meeting of the Barrington School Committee was held on Thursday, April 3, 2014 at the Administration Building. Mrs. Brody called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Present were Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Guida, Dr. Shea, Mr. Connor, Mr. Messore, Mrs. Dillon and Mr. Tarro.

Mrs. Brody introduced members of the Committee present at the meeting: Student Representative Mr. Timothy Connor, Mr. Patrick Guida, Dr. Robert Shea, Dr. Paula Dominguez and Mr. Scott Fuller. Mrs. Brody also introduced the Administration and Central Office Staff: Superintendent Mr. Michael Messore, Director of Finance and Administration Mr. Ronald Tarro, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Mrs. Paula Dillon, and Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent Mrs. Elizabeth Levesque.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Jeffrey Brenner, Chair of the Charter Review Commission, led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Achievement Recognition

Mr. Messore announced the following achievements across the district:

Barrington Middle School 8th Grade Student Allyson Grant is the branch level winner of the Fleet Reserve Association essay contest titled *The Bill of Rights and Me* and placed second in the regional competition.

Barrington High School Senior Cassidy Laidlaw won first place for the fourth consecutive year at the 2014 Intel International and Engineering Science Fair. Mr. Laidlaw will compete in Los Angeles in May as one of two Rhode Island representatives. Other winners at the fair included: First Grant to seniors Clayton Inman and Meredith Thompson; and freshmen Haotian Lu and Haoran Wen; and Second Grant to freshmen Priyanka Bonifaz, Bryelle Davis and Charlotte Szosz, sophomore Sahil Mishra, and junior Alexander Sadovnikoff. Senior Cassidy Laidlaw won the Intel and Computer Science Award, and the Mu Alpha Theta Award. Senior Clayton Inman won the Airforce Award and Rhode Island Society of Professional Engineers Award. Freshman Priyanka Bonifaz won the Rhode Island Society of Health-System Pharmacists Award; and freshmen Haotian Lu and Haoran Wen both won the Asin Materials Education Foundation Award.

Barrington Public Schools has been designated as a 2014 Best Community for Music Education by the National Association of Music Merchants. Barrington was chosen from a pool of 2,000 and is the only Rhode Island school district on the list of 376 school districts awarded this honor.

BPS Spotlight on Teaching and Learning

Mr. Messore introduced Mrs. Kristen Matthes, Instructional Coach and representative from the Math Curriculum Team, who provided information on the Parent Math Night for Grades K-5 held on March 27, 2014. Mrs. Matthes introduced two of the District's Math point teachers present at the meeting, Ms. Frances Taft, Grade 2 teacher at the Nayatt School and Mrs. Laura Butler, Grade 3 teacher at Primrose Hill School. Mrs. Matthes provided an overview of the event and its goal to demonstrate what students

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are learning, how they are learning, and to provide parents with resources on how to support students at home. Many teachers were on hand at the event allowing the opportunity for one-on-one conversations with parents. A similar event for Grades 6-8 and higher could be held in the future.

Information and Proposals

Mr. Messore introduced Mr. David Archambault, representative from AT&T and Smartlink who provided information on the proposal for the placement of a cell tower at the Sowams School. Mr. Archambault previously presented information to the Town Council and the Town Council has voted 5-0 to endorse the concept of the proposed tower. Mr. Archambault explained the reasoning behind the selection of the Sowams School location and noted the mandate that all service providers have to maintain for coverage of 911 calls. The proposed tower would be a minimum of 125 feet in height. Mr. Guida asked questions relating to the proposed access road, support structures, the frequency of service and requested safety studies. Dr. Dominguez asked about the criteria used for selecting the site in a residential area, construction and removal considerations, and whether Smartlink is a Rhode Island based company. Dr. Shea asked if other locations could be considered including at the Barrington Fire Department and if the proposed access road could be placed somewhere else on town owned land. Mr. Fuller commented that he would not support the construction of a cell tower or any structure on school property and asked if there was a Plan B option. Mrs. Brody questioned the minimum and maximum height of the proposed cell tower and if part of the Sowams parking lot would be captured for the utility easement. Discussion ensued on which, the Committee or Council, would have final authority to accept or reject the proposal and the Committee agreed to seek advice from the Town Solicitor and school counsel.

Mr. Messore and Mrs. Dillon presented the District Report. The new format features a comprehensive look at the District including the District profile, assessment data, SAT and ACT data, enrollment, per pupil expenditures, and teacher to student ratios. The District Report will be made available on the District website. Mrs. Dillon provided an update on the number of students needing assistance with fulfilling their graduation requirements, of which there are a total of seven students that remain out of the 31 originally reported earlier in the year. The number of juniors is currently at 19, all of whom are being provided interventions for academic support. Mr. Guida requested additional information on performance data for the Sowams School and Dr. Dominguez asked that future District report nights be more ambitious in comparing Barrington to top performing schools and aspirational districts on national and international levels.

General Public Discussion and Information

Mrs. Brody respectfully requested, in consideration of all who would like to comment, that each person wishing to speak to identify themselves by name and address, and keep their comments to two minutes.

Ms. Maria Wah-Fitta, of 8 Indigo Road, asked that the Committee take any studies provided by AT&T with a grain of salt as most reports are biased and wondered why there is not more of a focus on the health concerns. Ms. Wah-Fitta also pointed to the safety risk of having construction personnel who may not have criminal background checks present on school property.

Mr. Jeffrey Brenner, of 20 Chantilly Drive, and Chair of the Charter Review Commission, noted that

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that is a Town Council issue and more research should have been received before any vote was taken on the proposal. Mr. Brenner added that this is a bad proposal and another area should be considered for cell tower placement.

Mrs. Kristen Pearse, of 22 Walnut Road, and board member of the Barrington Neighbors and Newcomers Club, expressed her strong opposition to the proposal cell tower, both for aesthetic and environmental reasons. Mrs. Pearse asked those in the audience to stand if they oppose the cell tower, and the entire audience stood (approximately 50 people.)

Mr. Jason Knight, of 1 Newbrook Drive, echoed Mr. Brenner's comments and asked if it would be possible for AT&T to come up with an alternate technology solution to a cell tower.

Ms. Kristie McCann, of 84 Governor Bradford Drive, a parent and lawyer whose daughter will attend Kindergarten in the fall, read a prepared statement and noted that she would not want her child under the shadow of a cell tower, putting one on school property seems reckless and she cited research on health issues relative to cell tower radiofrequency emissions

Ms. Kathleen Shannon, of 7 Chantilly Drive, stressed the importance of as a group against this action putting data points in front of the Town Council to counter the weak points in the presentation made by AT&T.

Mrs. Beth Tanous, of 441 New Meadow Road, thanked parents and residents who have come together in a short period of time to oppose this issue and encouraged all to attend the next Town Council Meeting on Monday, April 7.

Mr. Phil Cahners, of 8 Kent Street, a general manager for Guitar Center, spoke to the excuse that could be used by AT&T in that there is no conclusive evidence to support the harm a cell tower can cause. Mr. Cahners suggested that cell phone users switch to Verizon as a possible solution.

Ms. Ellen Masterson, of 99 Highland Avenue, parent of a Sowams School student, commended the great therapists and aides at the school and noted that Sowams is the only K-3 school in the district without stairs. Ms. Masterson stressed the importance to not expose the District's most fragile students to additional radiation exposure as most families and physicians already have the task of tracking radiation exposure for their medically vulnerable children.

Ms. Heather Johnson, of 7 River Oak Road, shared research on medical studies of communities with cell towers and noted that there is no positive in this for students or the community. Ms. Johnson also pointed to the concern for the front door at the Sowams Schools that does not close properly and would like it to be addressed as an immediate need.

Mrs. Isabel Mashburn, of 11 Tall Pines Drive, read from the Internet on her mobile phone the rules relating to 911 calls, noting that wireless service providers are required to transmit all 911 calls regardless of service, thus the statement made by the AT&T representative on 911 service is moot.

Mrs. Brody thanked all members of the public who were present at the meeting for their advocacy and patience with the length of the meeting and stated that the Committee plans to vote on the proposed cell

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tower at the next regular School Committee meeting on April 17, 2014. Mrs. Brody added that Mrs. Cynthia Armour Coyne, Town Council Liaison to the School Committee's schedule presented a conflict and she could not attend tonight's meeting. The Town Council's next meeting, following the School Committee vote, is scheduled for May 5, 2014.

Old Business from Superintendent and Staff

Mr. Messore provided updates relating to the District Strategic Communication Plan. The administration is working to improve communication, holding events like the recent Parent Math Night, and addressing issues and concerns like the front door at the Sowams School. A total of three proposals have been received in response to the request for proposal issued for consulting services for a communication/media specialist of which more information will be provided at the next meeting.

In response to Mr. Fuller's previous request for budget information on curriculum history, Mr. Tarro provided the cost analysis for textbooks and workbooks for FY2003-2015. Mr. Tarro reported that the School Committee and Committee on Appropriations met on April 2, 2014.

Old Business from School Committee

Mr. Tarro reported that architect, Mr. Thomas Lonardo, has finalized the plans to address the District's immediate health and safety needs following meeting with the Rhode Island Department of Education. Strategic Building Solutions has been selected as the commissioning agent and bid specifications will be released as soon as possible.

The School Committee policy on Smoking and Use of Electronic Cigarettes/Vaping or Other Similar Devices in Public Schools was read aloud for a second reading. Dr. Shea stated that the Health and Wellness Committee unanimously supports the policy. The Committee continued discussion from the last meeting, addressing Dr. Dominguez's concerns for the loss of instructional time for students who are issued suspension from school. Mr. Fuller also expressed his concern and suggested the removal of the five to ten day suspension. Following discussion, the Committee agreed to move forward with the policy as written, since the language relative to smoking cigarettes has been incorporated in current policies at Barrington Middle School and Barrington High School, and will continue discussions on suspensions at a future meeting.

Dr. Shea moved and Dr. Dominguez seconded to adopt the policy on Smoking and Use of Electronic Cigarettes/Vaping or Other Similar Devices in Public Schools. The motion passed 5-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion.

New Business from Superintendent and Staff

Mr. Messore introduced Dr. Alexander Robertson, of 9 Elm Lane, parent and orthopedic surgeon who provided a formal presentation on the proposal for a privately-funded turf field at Barrington High School's Victory Field. Dr. Robertson provided samples of artificial turf, an overview of maintenance requirements, potential revenue sources to offset maintenance and replacement, and highlighted the advantages of a turf field versus a grass field. Installation of the turf field is estimated to cost \$600,000-

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\$850,000 with a replacement cost of approximately \$300,000 every 10 to 15 years. Mr. Edward Ionata, of 26 First Street, an engineer, explained the process for installation and spoke about the durability of a turf field. Mr. Christopher Flint, of 16 Melrose Avenue, Head Women's Soccer coach at Bryant University, noted that the university receives \$200 an hour for rental fees. Mr. Messore will meet with the Town Manager to discuss feasibility and logistics relative to scheduling and maintenance. Following discussion,

Mr. Guida moved and Dr. Dominguez seconded to endorse the concept of pursuing an artificial turf surface at Barrington High School's Victory Field following determination of its feasibility. The motion passed 5-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Dr. Dominguez moved and Mr. Guida seconded to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent with respect to the appointment of Margaret Lapitino, HM, Behavior Specialist. The motion passed 5-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Dr. Dominguez moved and Mr. Guida seconded to accept the request for leave of absence of Glen Simmons, HM, Grade 5. The motion passed 5-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Dr. Dominguez moved and Mr. Guida seconded to accept the retirement of Lynn Galvin, NA, Nurse. The motion passed 5-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Dr. Dominguez moved and Mr. Guida seconded to accept the retirement of Paula Montesi, PH, Principal.

Mr. Messore and the Committee thanked Mrs. Montesi for her leadership at the Primrose Hill School and for her collaboration with other building administrators.

The motion passed 5-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Dr. Dominguez moved and Dr. Shea seconded to accept the retirement of Elizabeth Stoner, PH, Kindergarten teacher. The motion passed 4-1 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Fuller and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion. Mr. Guida opposed.

Mr. Guida explained his vote noting that Mrs. Stoner has been a strong advocate for All Day Kindergarten for many years and that he had hoped she would not retire before the program is implemented in the District.

Dr. Dominguez moved and Mr. Guida seconded to accept the retirement of Janet Tessier, NA, Kindergarten teacher. The motion passed 5-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion.

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Mr. Tarro reported that two bids were received for the East Bay school districts food service management company. The East Bay school districts include Barrington, Bristol/Warren, Portsmouth, Tiverton, Little Compton and Middletown. Mr. Tarro noted that one vendor withdrew prior to the bid opening on March 20, 2014. A memo and tabulation sheet was provided to the Committee prior to the meeting and it was recommended by the administration to award the bid to the lowest, evaluated, and qualified bidder, Chartwells, with the contract taking effect in the 2014-2015 school year with the option of four additional renewal contract years. The participating East Bay Districts are working with the Rhode Island Department of Education to complete the contract template. Following discussion,

Dr. Dominguez moved and Mr. Guida seconded to award the East Bay school districts food service management company bid to the lowest, evaluated, and qualified bidder, Chartwells. The motion passed 5-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Mr. Tarro reported that multiple bids were received for the East Bay school districts health and training supplies, including the districts of Newport and East Providence. A memo and tabulation sheet was provided to the Committee prior to the meeting and it was recommended to utilize multiple vendors which have been deemed to be the lowest, evaluated, qualified bidders.

Dr. Dominguez moved and Mr. Guida seconded to award the East Bay school districts health and training supplies bid to the lowest, evaluated, and qualified bidders as designated in the tabulation sheet provided to the School Committee that include Henry Schein, Collins Sports Medicine, School Health and Moore Medical. The motion passed 4-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion. Mr. Fuller was not present for the vote.

New Business from School Committee

The School Committee policy on Field Trips was presented and read aloud for a first reading by the Committee. Mrs. Dillon noted that the policy as presented is the first step in a multi-stage process as there are many areas relating to field trips to be addressed including equity, student safety and issues of liability. Discussion ensued on the current focus groups in schools reviewing field trip procedures, policy for international trips, and what can be done to impact students now. The policy will be presented for a second reading and formal approval at the next Committee meeting.

Decision Items

Dr. Dominguez moved and Mr. Guida seconded to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed 5-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Discussion Future Agenda Items

Dr. Shea requested that a future agenda include a discussion on extending neurological baseline testing relating to the concussion policy. The Health and Wellness Committee has held discussions on the topic.

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Dr. Dominguez requested continued discussion on the topic of student discipline.

Mrs. Brody noted that a discussion on the District Diploma Waiver policy and a technology update are slated for the next meeting on April 17, 2014.

General Discussion to Guide Future Recommendations

Mr. Messore reported that the next regular meeting of the School Committee on Thursday, April 17, 2014 will feature discussion on assessments, student stress, the District Diploma Waiver policy tied to graduation requirements, an update on technology and discussion on consolidation of shared services.

General Public Discussion and Information

Mrs. Debby Perugini, of 6 Ferncliff Road, thanked the Committee for addressing the field trip policy and hopes that creative ways can be found to include all students as field trips enrich curriculum.

Ms. Heather Johnson, of 7 River Oak Road, addressed two concerns including the front door at the Sowams School that does not close properly and the playground issues with uneven playing areas due to challenges with the playground substrate material.

Mr. Fuller departed the meeting at 11:09 p.m.

Dr. Dominguez moved and Mr. Guida seconded to adjourn the regular meeting at 11:10 p.m. and go into Executive Session pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws Section 42-46-5(a)(2) for collective bargaining and litigation with BEST; and Section 42-46-5(a)(3) for discussion relative to school buildings security issues. The motion passed 4-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Dr. Dominguez moved and Dr. Shea seconded to adjourn the Executive Session at 11:30 p.m. and to seal the minutes and report that no votes were taken. The motion passed 4-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion.

Dr. Dominguez moved and Dr. Shea seconded to adjourn the regular meeting at 11:31 p.m. The motion passed 4-0 with Mrs. Brody, Dr. Dominguez, Mr. Guida and Dr. Shea voting in the affirmative for the motion.